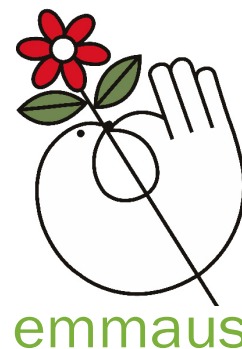


# Emmaus Coventry & Warwickshire



The homeless charity that works

Autumn 2011

Well here we are again time for another newsletter. Actually this one is well over due and I apologise to the regular supporters and readers but it has been so very busy here over the last 10 months we have struggled to find time to fit it all in. Because of this I thought I would start with a review of the year to fill you all in with what we have been up to. The biggest news is that we have expanded our Community from 15 to 18. We have rented a small house where the Companions that have moved in have more independence but still receive the support of the Community. Our deputy Karen has been working very hard with the wholesalers Costco. Karen has arranged for us to pick up all of their extra stock as it reaches its sell by date and distribute it around other homeless and food bank charities. This has gone amazingly well and is not only saving tons of food from going to land fill but helping those most in need all across the city. Costco have been so pleased with the work done by Emmaus Coventry they have started to work with other Emmaus communities across the country where they are

located near a Cost co store. Our

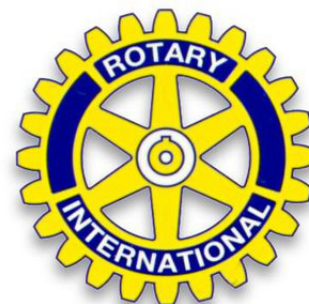


Leamington shop which opened in November is growing stronger as it reaches out to more of the local community. Our companions have decided that the Leamington shop on the High Street in Leamington will support the Lillington Childrens Centre, this started off with a £100 donation to help take some of the children on a day trip to the sea side. The money they had raised had been stolen in a burglary and the Coventry Companions heard this intimately the cash decided to try to help the Children Centre through out the year not only financially but in any way we can.



Luckily for us we have been contacted by a young lady called Dolas who has been trying to set up a system at Coventry University to recycle as much of the goods student leave behind as possible. We were donated 50 single mattresses and several fridges, from

this we have also struck up a great relationship with the Coventry University Students Union (cusu). We are hoping to help the Student Union card holders with a 20% discount in store. It also gave us a chance to offer work experience to students during their time at



Coventry University. The cusu also donated a fantastic amount of furniture as they moved offices which included desks, bar stools, filing cabinets and lots of office furniture that has all been selling well in our shop in Red Lane. We have also been working closely with several Rotary Clubs including Coventry, Kenilworth (Kenilworth festival), Lutterworth (Santa Fun Run) and Meriden who have chosen us to be their charity of the year. We are going to spend the year working together on as many different projects as we can including their megaride festival next june.

Many thanks for your continued support  
Kieron Dunne  
Community Leader



# Meet Our Staff

Here we have a chance for you to learn a little about the staff at Emmaus Coventry, starting with our newest addition to the team Peter Johnson.

I came to Emmaus Coventry as a Companion in August 2009 after spending a year with another charity rehabilitating from a long period of alcohol abuse. This had taken me - and those around me who cared - to the depths of despair driven as I was by a relentlessly self destructive lifestyle having long since abdicated from the world of responsible behaviour. I was living with my son at the time and at the age of 16 he was largely fending for himself whilst trying to help me - a dreadful few years culminating in me going into rehab whilst he went to live with his aunt.

When I came to Emmaus 12 months later I was in relatively good shape and sober although I had a lot of anxieties about the future. What was I going to do that would fully engage me mind, body and spirit to the extent that I wouldn't relapse?

The answer soon became clear as I settled into community life and work, enjoying a growing sense of contentment and connection with the rest of the world that I hadn't had for a long time. Selfishness, greed, fear and self pity had taken a heavy toll but I was excited to realise that I was capable of and thirsted for profound

change. All this was possible at Emmaus - I might yet lay claim to leading a meaningful life.

After nine months at The Old Vicarage I moved to Emmaus Preston as a core Companion helping to re-establish the community and shop after a period of closure - this was hard work but exciting to see what half a dozen people working together with a common vision could achieve in a short space of time. At about this time I started to consider my future with Emmaus seriously - taking advantage of the many training opportunities available and resulting in myself and two of the other original companions becoming CA's. The months passed and the community grew to 15+ by which time I was looking around for a Staff position somewhere within Emmaus. I saw the post of Community Support Worker at Coventry, applied for it and was lucky enough to be successful.

I've always loved the site of Emmaus Coventry with its quaint, stone-floored Old Vicarage steeped in history looking out on the lake and rambling gardens and I'm excited to be back.

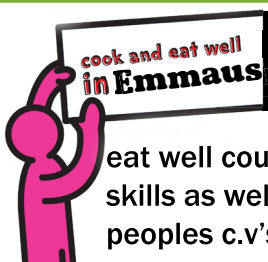


Pete outside the vicarage

This is yet another stage in my recovery and I'm confident I can make a difference - enabling other Companions to get the most out of their time at Emmaus whatever their goals might be.



Julian and Hassab with an apple crumble fit for a king



One of the rules when living in emmaus is that everyone takes their turn cooking. This can be quite daunting if you haven't cooked much to then cook for 15-20 people. This is being made easier for some with the introduction of the cook and eat well course. The course is giving people the chance to learn basic cooking and food hygiene skills as well as gaining confidence in the kitchen and earning some certificates to be added to peoples c.v's.

# Damian's story

I never knew my Dad. My Mum brought me and my sister up on her own and worked really hard juggling 3 or 4 jobs, just to support us. When I was around 15 she was sectioned under the Mental Health Act for the first time, then released back into my care. You hear a lot about young carers today, but back then, there was no support. She was dependent on tranquillisers like termazepam, and was eating them like sweets. Eventually, when I was 19, she got so bad that she was sectioned indefinitely. Two police and a doctor came to take her away – it was probably the most harrowing night of my life.

I couldn't cope with the massive change in my life. I began a downward spiral into drugs that only stopped when a friend took me under his wing and got me a job in his business. I was there for 9 years but in a way, the money was too good, and I got into drugs again. I realised that I needed to get right away and make a fresh start, so applied for and got a bar supervisor job in Inverness.

With the new job, I stopped the drugs, but started drinking. I would get horrifically drunk every night and also began to self harm. I think it was the loneliness and relationship problems. I tried to sort myself out by going

to AA and SMART (Self Management And Recovery Training) and began well with both of them, but a couple of drinks meant it all spiralled out of control again. I continued to self-harm and attempted suicide.

After 3 years in Inverness, I'd run out of options, had nowhere to go and was on the streets for 2 weeks. It was November and arctic. The homeless agency sorted me out with a train back to Warwickshire, but when I got to the council offices, they weren't expecting me. I stayed in 3 hostels before coming to Emmaus. One of them was soul destroying. There were guys in there who'd been there for 30 years. There was nothing to do in the daytime except drink, so for me, it was a cataclysmically bad move.

My keyworker in the hostel referred me to Emmaus Coventry and Warwickshire. I moved in about 4 months ago. I was very sceptical about managing on £35 a week but it's more than enough because everything you need is paid for.

This place is a godsend. I don't understand why there are hostels around when there could be places like this. They trust me here. Yesterday they just gave me the car keys and money and



Damian Taking a break from face painting at our Big Lunch Gathering

asked if I could do the shopping. I've never had that kind of trust before. It means a lot to me. I've thought long and hard about where I was 6 months ago and I look at myself now. I'm proud of what I've achieved. I'm happy having a purpose and a reason to get out of bed. It's a wonderful feeling. I actually enjoy getting up for work, apart from when I'm on house cleaning! On Sunday, I borrow the car to visit my Mum. The 3 years away from her were difficult, and it took me a long time to work myself up to going to see her. Now it's just nice to go over, she does know it's me eventually – I have to explain Emmaus to her all over again! Since this article was written Damian has successfully moved in to his own bed sit and is now looking for full time employment. He still take part in the life of the community and regularly drives as a volunteer.

## Twenty first century emmaus



If you are lucky enough to have a smart phone scan here to go to our website or facebook page



Find us on

facebook

Just search for Emmaus Coventry



Phil Highley our volunteer hero.

## Phil is our Hero

You may remember from our last news letter that one of our trustees Phil had raised over a thousand pounds for Emmaus while travelling round all the UK communities using his free bus pass. This however is not the only heroic thing that Phil takes part in. Phil volunteers for us at Emmaus Coventry every week, driving our van and he also volunteers with other groups such as The Scouts, Waverley day centre, Kenilworth Rotary and the Kenilworth Festival.

He is always doing something to help others and this year he was recognised by the Coventry Telegraph as he was the winner of one of their Community Awards. Our companions love having Phil supporting the Community and he always gets on with everyone and we hope that his involvement with Emmaus lasts for many more years and he continues to be a source of inspiration for all of us. Well done Phil.

## Solidarity News

The Companions at Emmaus Coventry have created their own walking group. We have been looking at ways to get some exercise and raise money for solidarity causes. Each month we are signing up for a different walk, run or cycle and trying to raise funds for that event. So far we have cycled 30 miles round Gloucester, walked 7 KM round Coombe Abbey this was particularly significant for one of our Companions Tony who did the walk in memory of his father and also walked 13 miles at the Walk of Warwickshire in aid of the Snowball Appeal. We ask customers to sponsor us and we

also sell specially selected items of furniture in our shops as solidarity items. The money that is taken for these items goes straight in to our sponsorship fund to support that months event. If you would like to get involved with any of the activities we get involved with or to sponsor us pop in to either of our shops and ask at the counter for more details



## Support Emmaus Coventry & Warwickshire

### I Would Like:

- More information on Emmaus Coventry & Warwickshire
- To give a donation

### By Cheque/CAF

I enclose a cheque/voucher for £ \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Please make cheque/voucher payable to Emmaus Coventry & Warwickshire)

### By Banker's order

To the manager \_\_\_\_\_  
 Branch address \_\_\_\_\_

Please pay Emmaus Coventry the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ (figures)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (Amount in words)

At Natwest, 118 Walsgrave Road, Stoke, Coventry, CV2 4ZZ  
 (sort code 52-30-02; Account no. 69667497)

Starting on  /  /

Monthly  Quarterly  Half Yearly  Annually

Title \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Gift Aid Declaration

*Please complete if you are a Tax Payer (excluding CAF donations)*

I want the charity to treat this donation and all future donations until further notice as Gift Aid Donations.

Title \_\_\_\_\_ First Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

Post Code \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Notes:

1. You must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on your donations in the tax year.
2. You can cancel this declaration at any time by notifying us.
3. If in future your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income or capital gains equal to the tax that the charity reclaims, you can cancel your declaration.
4. If you pay tax at the higher rate you can claim further tax relief please contact us or ask your local tax office for leaflet IR113 Gift Aid.

Please Notify us if you change your name or address.

### Your personal details

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone no. \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to Emmaus Coventry & Warwickshire